

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9996

To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the laws relating to patient advocacy for patients who receive health care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 15, 2024

Mr. YAKYM introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the laws relating to patient advocacy for patients who receive health care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Veterans Ad-
5 vocate Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL VET-**
2 **ERANS' ADVOCATE IN DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
3 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7309A of title 38, United
5 States Code, is amended—

6 (1) by striking the section heading and insert-
7 ing the following new section heading:

8 **“§ 7309A. Office of the National Veterans' Advocate”;**

9 (2) in subsection (a)—

10 (A) by striking “within the Office of the
11 Under Secretary for Health” and inserting
12 “within the Office of the Secretary”;

13 (B) by striking “an office” and inserting
14 “an independent office”; and

15 (C) by striking “‘Office of Patient Advoca-
16 cy’” and inserting “‘Office of the National
17 Veterans' Advocate’”;

18 (3) in subsection (b)—

19 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “Office
20 of Patient Advocacy” and inserting “Office of
21 the National Veterans' Advocate”; and

22 (B) in paragraph (2)—

23 (i) by striking “Office of Patient Ad-
24 vocacy” and inserting “Office of the Na-
25 tional Veterans' Advocate”;

1 (ii) by striking “by the Under Sec-
2 retary for Health” and inserting “by the
3 Secretary”; and

4 (iii) by striking “shall report directly
5 to the Under Secretary for Health” and in-
6 serting “shall be independent of the Sec-
7 retary”;

8 (4) in subsection (c)—

9 (A) by striking the subsection heading and
10 inserting “(c) FUNCTIONS.—”;

11 (B) in paragraph (1)—

12 (i) by striking “function” and insert-
13 ing “functions”;

14 (ii) by striking “is” and inserting
15 “are”; and

16 (iii) by inserting before the period at
17 the end the following: “and to monitor De-
18 partment processes and make rec-
19 ommendations to Congress on how to im-
20 prove the Department’s efficiency and care
21 for veterans”; and

22 (C) by adding at the end the following new
23 paragraphs:

24 “(4) On a quarterly basis, the Director shall submit
25 to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and

1 House of Representatives independent legislative rec-
2 ommendations for the improvement of health outcomes for
3 veterans, the quality of health care and benefits provided
4 by the Department, and the cost efficiency of the Depart-
5 ment. Such recommendations may not be reviewed by the
6 Secretary or by any other official of the Department prior
7 to submission.

8 “(5) The Office shall have a designated publicly ac-
9 cessible website that includes access to the information
10 technology system required under paragraph (3).”;

11 (5) by redesignating subsection (f) as sub-
12 section (g); and

13 (6) by inserting after subsection (e) the fol-
14 lowing new subsection (f):

15 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
16 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
17 \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029.”.

18 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
19 at the beginning of chapter 73 of such title is amended
20 by striking the item relating to section 7309A and insert-
21 ing the following new item:

“7309A. Office of the National Veterans’ Advocate.”.

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